11.0
Site Design

11.1 Intent

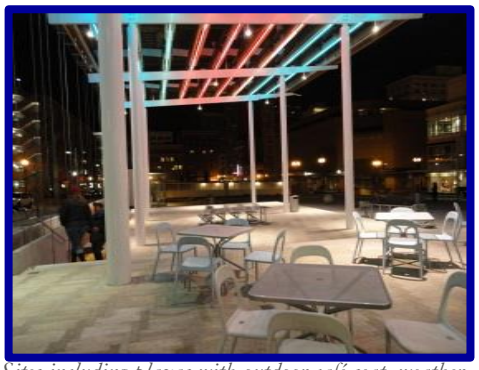
To achieve the vibrant, mixed use Neighborhoods which are Pedestrian Friendly and have a Public Realm, requires thoughtful urban design decisions. Decisions cannot be made based only on functionality, but must also consider how to make the Project memorable, identifiable, livable, and comprehensible. The intent of this Chapter is to establish site design standards that orient development so that it defines the Public Realm, reacts to and acknowledges the natural environment and improves the pedestrian and bicycle experience. These Site Design Standards support and weave the other Chapters of the Development and Design Standards together.

11.2 General Standards

A. **Integrate with Nature and the Surroundings.** Sites should be designed to implement the Green Necklace vision (Urban Community Goal B) by integrating with the context of the surrounding natural environment including trees, creeks, and mountains as well as adjacent urban surroundings.

B. **Circulation Priorities.** Pedestrian and bicycle circulation needs should be raised to a priority equal with motorized circulation priorities, while ensuring sites are designed for functional motorized transportation.

C. **Sense of Place.** Development should be designed to generate a sense of belonging, community and interest. Developments in differing Districts could be designed to establish distinct characters and District Visions as established in the Central Issaquah Plan. For example, in the Old Route 10



Sites including plazas with outdoor café seat, weather protection and lighting contribute to the pedestrian experience.

Creating a sense of place through neon lights and signage in Old Route 10 District.

Creating a sense of place through natural materials of brick and wood, and keeping mature trees as an amenity.

District developments should be designed to reflect the Route 66 era, or at the Western Gateway to maintain significant open space views from I-90, or along I-90 to incorporate the green edge of Issaquah with lush plantings while maintaining adequate business visibility.

D. **Sustainable Site Design.** Development should incorporate the most effective and innovative sustainable green building program measures. Measures could be applied such as integration of the site layout, orientation, and construction of the overall development (including buildings, parking, utilities and other site elements) with existing site characteristics such as existing topography, critical areas, trees, solar and wind patterns, and to address other considerations such as conduit for fiber, broadband readiness, and building and lighting power minimization.

E. **Sense of Arrival.** Sites should promote unique design features and a sense of arrival in each District and development to establish distinct boundaries that are recognizable to the community.

F. **Existing Features and Context.** Sites should be designed to respond to existing features and context, such as high water table and adjacent creeks, internal and external views, solar orientation as well as existing and anticipated Community Spaces.

G. **Views and Vistas.** Developments shall preserve, as specified below, views of the forested hillsides of Tiger, Squak and Cougar Mountains, Sammamish Plateau and Mt. Rainier from public spaces including Circulation Facilities and Significant Community Spaces as follows:

1. Along the axis of existing Circulation Facilities, preserve the existing linear view; however, if the existing Circulation Facilities are curved, then an AAS determining the important views to be retained, shall be required. The AAS must be reviewed and approved prior to approval of the project's land use permit.

Issaquah's zHome exhibits sustainable site and building design. (inhabitat.com/David Vandervort)

This artistic gateway signals a sense of arrival to The Waterfront in Seattle.

This plaza uses the scenic view as a focal point.

Wayfinding is important for all users.

2. For New Circulation Facilities, use views of the forested hillsides listed above as one criterion in determining appropriate layout.
3. Design Significant Community Spaces in response to the views along new and existing Circulation Facilities. Consider capturing other views, while meeting minimum densities, FAR, and other Central Issaquah goals.
4. Building locations may be adjusted as determined by the Director to ensure preservation of these view corridors, as specified above. The following techniques could be employed: increasing distances between high-rise buildings, retaining or creating view corridors, and strategic placement of building bulk or height, while meeting minimum densities, FAR, and other Central Issaquah goals.

Where applicable, developments shall use Issaquah's natural features to connect to local context and provide orientation including street-end vistas of treed hillsides and peak-a-boo views from the street level.

H. **Intuitive Wayfinding.** Sites should be designed so all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists can easily orient themselves and understand how to move through the development.

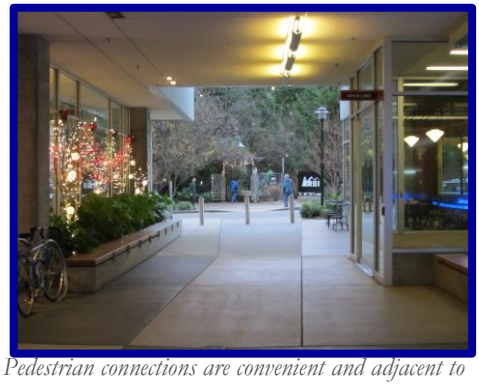
I. **Universal Design.** Site design should employ principles of Universal Design to create developments that are inherently accessible to people with and without disabilities.

J. **Multi-functionality.** Site design should create opportunities for multiple uses in, for example:

1. Raised planters and walls can be used for seating;
2. Planter strips may accommodate bioswales;
3. Raised utility vaults can be an opportunity for a playscape;
4. An emergency staging/fire lane area can be used for recreation or informal gathering the balance of the time;
5. Fire turnarounds can be integrated into plaza/trail/road configurations;

Large plazas can also be used as off-peak markets.

Site amenities such as wayfinding signage, seating, bike racks, landscaping, special paving and outdoor café seating make this a popular plaza.

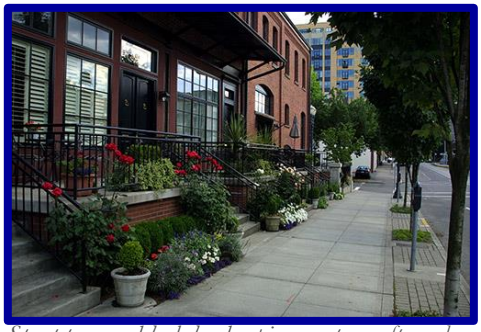


Pedestrian connections are convenient and adjacent to weather protection.

6. Parking lots and garages can be used as off-peak markets;
7. Low volume driving surface can be shared with pedestrians and bicyclists;
8. Nature trails and utility corridors can be combined;
9. Play elements that also educate;
10. Swales or pavers that manage stormwater and create Community Space opportunity;
11. Utility and infrastructure cabinets can be surfaced with art, information, and maps.

K. **Site Amenities and Street Furniture.** Site design should provide site amenities and street furniture in Community Spaces and adjacent Circulation Facilities to support the uses and create a public living room. Amenities may include benches, pet pickup stations, bike racks, art, bollards, drinking fountains, transit or bus shelters, overlooks, informational and directional signage, interpretive kiosks, waste receptacles, directories. Amenities should be easily accessible to pedestrians and not impinge pedestrian routes.

L. **Special Paving Materials.** Special and varied paving materials should be used to create visual interest and highlight areas of importance. This might be at key locations in Community Spaces, Circulation Facility intersections, and important pedestrian crossings of vehicular routes.



Street trees and lush landscaping create a softer urban ambiance in the examples above. (top photo: Pedbikeimages.org/Laura Sandt)

Sites, as those shown in the two above images, shall be designed to integrate with Community Spaces.

11.3 Standards for All Uses

A. **Pedestrian Connections.** Pedestrian facility connections shall be convenient and with generally no further than 250 feet of separation when a block length exceeds 300 feet.

B. **Connections to Surrounding Circulation Facilities and Properties.** Motorized and non-motorized connections shall be provided to adjacent Circulation Facilities and properties. See also Circulation Facilities, Chapter 6.0 and Circulation Design, Chapter 12.0.

C. **Emphasize Landscaping**. Site design shall include lush, green landscaping. High priorities shall include broad spreading canopy trees both on-site

and on the adjacent right-of-way. See Landscape, Chapters 10.0 and 16.0, for greater detail.

D. **Community Space and Site Design.** Sites shall be designed to intentionally integrate Community Spaces into the site design. There are required Community Spaces for specific types of Development. See Community Space, Chapters 7.0 and 13.0, for greater detail about required Community Spaces. When not required, Community Spaces are highly encouraged. Encouraged Community Spaces may include:

1. Pocket Parks. Small parks typically located within walking distance of users and maintained by the property owner and shall be designed to be meaningful additions to the District's Community Space. The following are examples of possible types of improvements in Pocket Parks: Art garden; Picnic area; Open lawn area; Children's play area; Horseshoe pits; Water garden; Exercise course; Barbecue area; Covered areas; Tetherball; Painted chess board; and Volley Ball Court.
2. Community Gardens. Community Gardens are common areas provided for the purpose of gardening and are part of the sustainability approach envisioned for the Central Issaquah Plan. The following are examples of Community Gardens: P-patch; Cutting flower gardens; Demonstration gardens; Compost centers; Container gardens; Terraced gardens; and edible landscaping. When reviewing a proposed Community Garden plan, the Director will consider safety, compatibility with surrounding uses, location, and whether the size of the Community Garden is appropriate to the use(s).
3. Plazas. Plazas denote important places, create a focus, and/or increase light and air at street level. They also function as points of orientation. They may be located adjacent to buildings, within a Park or within other Open Space. Plazas shall to accessible to the public, although access may be limited at times.
4. Informal Gathering Areas. Elements and location of Informal Gathering Areas may vary depending on the abutting uses. Informal Gathering Areas may extend into the

Site design that includes comfortable places for stopping and visiting, as shown in the two images above, adds vitality to the urban environment.

Design elements such as informal benches, landscaped planter box and wide walkways make this area open and inviting.

A courtyard with open café seating and adjacent wide sidewalks with street trees make this a popular destination.

streetscape. Informal Gathering Areas shall be constructed and maintained by a private or common entity.

5. Recreation. In addition to recreational opportunities provided in Neighborhood Parks creek trails, and the walkways and bikeways provided as part of the circulation improvements, additional recreational amenities may be provided on site to satisfy the needs of area residents and workers. These may be located within buildings, on rooftops or on near-by parcels within the Neighborhood.
6. Places for Stopping and Viewing. The site should provide comfortable and inviting places where people can sit, rest and visit. People-watching, socializing and eating are restful and pleasurable activities for the pedestrian; providing special places where they can do these activities increases the pedestrian's sense of enjoyment. Such places add vitality to the urban environment. People use available seating in open, well-designed areas, not in secluded or awkward spots.
7. Recommended Design Elements:
   a. Courtyards, squares and plazas with active adjacent ground floor uses.
   b. Buildings surrounding green spaces to give the space visual definition and vitality generated by active ground floor uses.
   c. Formal (benches) and informal (e.g., wide steps, edges of landscaped planters and low walls) seating areas.
   d. Higher degree of seating areas near active retail establishments (especially outside eating and drinking establishments and near food vendors).
   e. Seating adjacent to pedestrian walkways.
   f. Places for stopping and viewing adjacent to and within parks, squares, plazas, and courtyards.
   g. Trees, shrubs and plants to help define walkways, create transitions from the park to the street and provide visual interest.
   h. Sense of separation from vehicular traffic, for example, through low walls, raised planters and parallel parked cars.

Sense of separation from vehicular traffic through low walls, raised planters and parallel parked cars

Design details such as an arbor, seating, and landscaping keeps visual interest for the pedestrian.

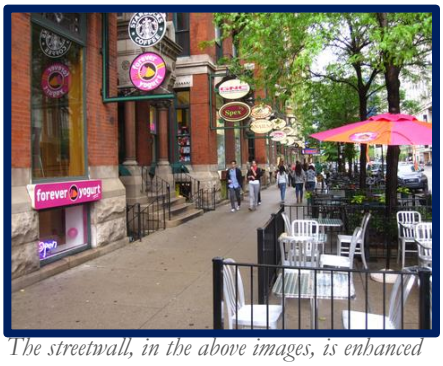
Screened with landscape and an arbor, this drive through is hidden by street uses and adjacent residential residents

i. Structures, pavilions and seating areas that are easily accessible and feel safe and secure during day and evening hours.
j. Greenways or pedestrian walkways and courtyards in residential or office development areas.

8. Prohibited.
   a. Pocket parks, forecourts and plazas without active uses along retail streets.
   b. Outdoor spaces separated from the street by visual barriers or change in grade that would cause the Community Space to feel unsafe and vulnerable instead of safe and active.
   c. Courtyards, squares and plazas adjacent to parking lots and other inhospitable areas without appropriate landscaping, such as mounding, lush shrubbery or raised planters at least 4 feet tall.
   d. "Leftover" green spaces.
   e. Sunken plazas disconnected from the edge of the street.
   f. Seating areas more than three feet above or below street grade,
   g. Seating areas adjacent to loading, service bays or storage areas.
   h. Seating areas that are hidden, secluded, dark or unsecured spaces behind or to the side of buildings.
   i. Seating areas along high vehicle traffic areas.

E. **Parking and Drive-Through Location**. Parking, Drive-Throughs, and similar Auto-Dependent facilities shall be located to minimize visual impacts and conflict with pedestrians and bikes. These facilities shall be screened to ensure the streetwall is continued. See Parking, Chapters 8.0 and 15.0, for greater detail.

F. **Establish Streetwall (Build-To-Lines).** Every building and structure shall be located toward the designated Circulation Facilities in Figure 6A Central Issaquah Auto Inclusive Circulation Facility Classification Map to comply with "Build-To-Lines" as required in the District Standards Table, Chapter 4.0, for the percentage established below in Sections 11.3.G-J. At other portions of the Circulation Facility where buildings and structures are not required, architectural and landscape



The streetwall, in the above images, is enhanced with landscaping, pedestrian lighting and pedestrian signage. Additional walkway width is an additional pedestrian amenity. (lower image: Pedbikeimages.org/ Dan Burden)

This building frontage includes active areas with bike racks, fountains, outdoor café seating and weather protection. This design amplifies the importance of this corner.

elements shall be used to maintain a strong streetwall presence that softens and/or enhances the pedestrian experience. Buildings and structures adjacent to Community Spaces shall also comply with "Build-To-Lines" as required in the District Standards Table, Chapter 4.0.

1. **Variation in the Build-To-Line.** The space between the property line and the building shall include landscaping with evergreen plantings to maintain year-round interest in combination with benches, low walls, and other hardscape elements to enhance the social interaction, soften hardscape spaces and contribute to the Green Necklace while establishing a boundary between public and semi-private areas. See also Chapter 14.3.A.3. (Building Mass and Design) Other pedestrian amenities may also be used, for instance, the public sidewalk may be widened to include elements such as additional walkway width, outdoor seating, retail displays, landscape planters, benches or fountains while maintaining a pedestrian friendly environment on the sidewalk.

G. **Minimum Building Frontage**. Sufficient length of buildings shall be present at the Build-To-Line to maintain a generally continuous streetwall and limit spatial gaps to those necessary to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access. Minimum Building Frontage shall be as follows:
   1. In the Urban Core zone, minimum Building Frontage is at least 75%.
   2. In all other zones, minimum Building Frontage is at least 60%.

H. **Corner Building Frontage.** Building mass shall be present at the intersection of Circulation Facilities to amplify the importance of this corner. Building Frontage shall occupy all of the Build-To-Line at intersections for a minimum distance of sixty (60) feet from the corner. Exceptions may be allowed to meet clear traffic sight line triangle requirements, or for Community Space as allowed below.

I. **Community Space as Building Frontage.** The Building Frontage requirement may be reduced by ten (10) percentage points to accommodate

The streetwall, above images, provides privacy for the ground floor offices, yet includes landscape and architectural interest for pedestrians in the Build-To-Line.

Above/Below: Residential doorways face the street yet still have privacy from landscape and architectural features.

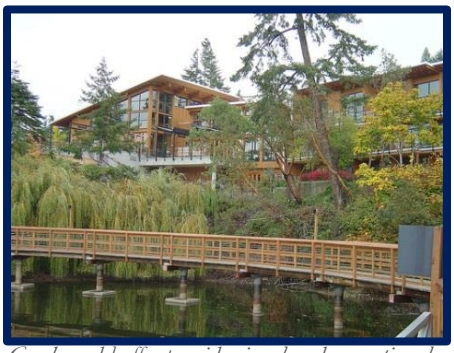
Community Spaces including plazas, outdoor café seating, or entry courts.

J. **Alternative Building Frontage.** Up to 20% of the Building Frontage requirement may be fulfilled through architectural and landscape measures along the Build-To-Line, such as to screen a surface parking lot. Elements to fulfill this requirement may include a combination of: canopy structures combined with pergolas, arcades, trellises, arbors that achieve a 6'-8' height combined with lower decorative masonry walls thirty-six (36) inches in height, and semi-opaque landscaping.

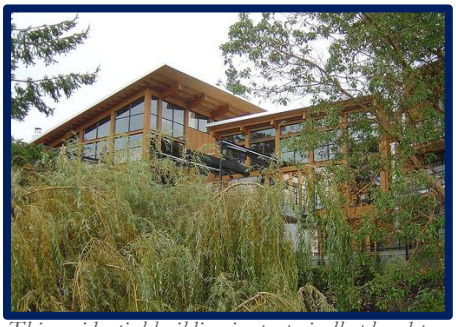
K. **Above-ground Utilities.** Above-ground and at-grade utilities shall be located to eliminate their visual impact, such as within buildings or underground. Where these options are not feasible, utilities shall be sited and screened to minimize their presence, preferably located interior of the site or along alleys. Screening may be a combination of architecture or landscaping, depending on the size and location of the utility.

M. **Residential Garage Setbacks**. Residential garages shall be sited and designed to minimize impact on the pedestrian. Street-facing garages shall:
1. Have driveways eight feet long or shorter, or 18 feet long or longer so as to keep motorized vehicles from extending into the nonmotorized corridors.
2. Have a maximum width of fifty percent (50%) of the overall building width, or 18 feet, whichever is less.
3. The plane of the garage door shall be setback from the front building façade at least four (4) feet.
4. Blend with the primary house color.

Recognizing the natural amenity of this wetland buffer, building orientation includes this scenic overlook.



Creek and buffer provide visual and recreational amenity incorporated in this building orientation.



This residential building is strategically placed to maximize views of natural areas.

Screening service and loading facilities.

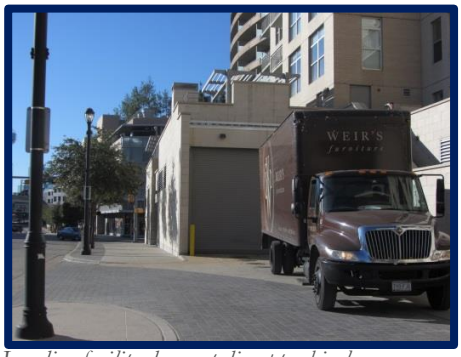
11.4 Environmentally Critical Areas

A. **Minimize Impacts**. All Development and associated Water-Oriented Features within and adjacent to environmentally critical areas such as Issaquah Creek, East Fork of Issaquah Creek, Tibbetts Creek, and other creeks, wetlands, and buffers shall be consistent with the Critical Areas Regulations and the City's Shoreline Master

Program, IMC 18.10 and Outdoor Lighting regulations, IMC 18.07.107.

B. **Building Orientation.** Buildings shall be sited to recognize and acknowledge natural areas through methods such as:
   1. Building stepback(s), balconies, decks including roof top decks with visual access and orientation to the creek,
   2. Public and semi-public Community Spaces oriented to the adjacent creek buffer,
   3. Passive recreation, such as picnicking or bird watching;
   4. Water-Oriented Features (usually accessory to a principle use) that may include viewing platforms, trails, and outdoor seating areas and are accessible to the public while containing human and pet impacts; or
   5. Other techniques that achieve the overall intent of this section as approved by the Director.

Good example of a utility screen that does not disrupt the streetwall.



Loading facility does not disrupt vehicular or pedestrian travel and is out of view of street activity.


Street elements of street trees, interesting storefronts, sidewalks and yarn graffiti create an interesting venue.

11.5 Service, Loading, and Waste Enclosures

A. **Consolidate Facilities.** Service and loading areas among users or needs, should be shared and consolidated wherever practical. On-street loading shall be used when possible to meet some or all of the loading and service needs.

B. Service, loading, and waste enclosures should be located within buildings or lidded over within courtyards. When this is not possible, they are encouraged to have roof cover to reduce their visibility from above and reduce wildlife access.

C. Waste enclosures and receptacles should be designed to discourage wildlife access.

D. Screening measures for service, loading, and waste enclosures should be customized to lessen visual, aural, odiferous, or other impacts as needed and integrated with the overall landscape and architectural theme of the development.

E. **Location and Size**. Service and loading facilities shall be located at the rear of the building. Locate on alleys when possible. If a rear location is not feasible, then facilities may be placed along the building's side but recessed from the Build-To-Line

at least 30 feet to minimize visual impacts to the Circulation Facility and prevent service vehicles from extending onto adjacent walkways. The solid waste dumpster and recycling facilities shall be sized in accordance with the enclosure handout (IMC 18.07.130).

F. **Screening.** The presence of service and loading facilities including service yards, solid waste dumpster and recycling areas, machinery storage, other storage areas, mechanical appurtenances including mechanical and utility equipment, and other places which tend to be unsightly shall be minimized in number and to all possible vantage points, including from above, if applicable. Measures to minimize presence include:
   1. Architectural solid walls, landscaping and/or fencing with a screen height of six (6) feet, or at least the height of the items to be screened
   2. Screening that is effective in both winter and summer;
   3. Designed using materials and detailing which are compatible with the development materials;
   4. Placed in alleys; and
   5. Service and loading facilities shall not be located on the same face of a building as residential uses.

G. **Circulation Facility Conflict.** These facilities shall be sited so trucks do not block pedestrian or vehicular traffic on-site or in adjacent Circulation Facilities unless potential conflicts are anticipated and addressed.